

MINUTES
CALIFORNIA BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL
June 16, 1995
Elk Grove School District Board Room
9510 Elk Grove-Florin Road, Elk Grove, California

Executive Council Members Present

Doug Wheeler, Resources Agency
Penny Howard, Bureau of Reclamation
Ken Jones, Department of Parks and Recreation
Nancy Huffman, Northern California County Supervisors Association
Chuck Raysbrook, Department of Fish and Game
Diana Jacobs, State Lands Commission
Don Erman, University of California
Richard Wilson, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
G. Lynn Sprague, U.S. Forest Service
Ed Hastey, Bureau of Land Management
Bob Hoekzema, U.S. Bureau of Mines
Wayne White, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bob Potter, Department of Water Resources
Robert Meacher, Regional Council of Rural County Supervisors
Anne Kinsinger, National Biological Service
Bob Haussler, California Energy Commission
Chauncey Poston, California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
Nita Vail, Department of Food and Agriculture
Helen Flach, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Maria Rea, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Stanley Albright, National Park Service
Michael Fischer, California Coastal Conservancy
Jerry Harmon, San Diego Association of Governments

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR THE MARCH 24, 1995 MEETING

The minutes were approved as submitted.

REPORT ON LOCAL GROUP FORUM MEETING JUNE 15, 1995

Mark Nechodom reported on the Local Group Forum held the previous day. The forum's focus was on the connections between local planning, private conservation initiatives, and biodiversity. Notes are accessible from the council's home page.

The meeting began with presentations from: Steve Jenkins, Yolo County Planning Department; Rich Engel, Yolo County Resource Conservation District; Lynn Parvis, Sierra Planning Organization; and Andrea Mackenzie and Roberta Goulart, Alameda-Contra Costa Biodiversity Working Group. Afterwards, the facilitated discussion addressed obstacles to participating in planning efforts. Comments and suggestions were as follows:

1. There is an increasing call for education and involvement of local interests in the implementation of conservation plans, especially involving homeowners associations and municipal governments in the process. More local control over implementation is needed.
2. Regulators should primarily participate and not regulate. Regulators should get involved early as participants in the process and provide consistent information about the regulatory boundaries of the planning process.
3. Incentive-based solutions need to be developed to bring stakeholders and local interests to the planning process earlier.
4. Be mindful of the differences between people whose perceptions of property rights is absolute and others who talk about the long tradition of obligation and property ownership.

The group was also asked to consider ways of improving the process of conducting the Local Group Forums. Suggestions were:

1. Concentrate on a more aggressive outreach process to bring people in from local groups, particularly municipal and county planners.
2. Solicit participation from local expertise and regional managers.
3. Be more subject or topic specific. Involve the local groups in identifying a particular topic area and developing the local group forum agenda. However, it is important to provide the ecosystem context when discussing particular topics.

Michael Fischer suggested the consideration of offering two or three small grants to organizations who would present the issues pertinent to the area. This might stimulate more local participation and also the participation of the council.

PRESENTATION ON PLAN ADOPTED BY DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

Margit Aramburu, Executive Director of the Delta Protection Commission, presented information to the council regarding the work of the Delta Protection Commission. The Delta Protection Commission is an entity that is addressing some of the most difficult land use and resource management issues throughout the Delta estuary.

Ms. Aramburu provided the council with an overview of the commission's history and called their attention to a booklet which further described the commission's program. In 1992 the state legislature passed legislation identifying the Delta as a region of statewide and international significance and created the commission. The legislation charged the commission with procuring, adopting and to a limited extent enforcing a regional land use and resource management plan for the primary zone. Those are the undeveloped areas within the Delta that are primarily still in agriculture. The three primary land uses are agriculture, recreation and wildlife habitat.

The commission's authority is over local government actions and not over state or federal projects. Permits are not issued for every new project in the Delta. The commission agreed to respect the differences by which the local governments regulate land uses in the area and allow the existing community based planning prerogatives and programs to continue under the overall umbrella of carrying out the goals of the act.

The commission's plan promotes continuation of agriculture as the primary land use, new and creative ideas to promote agriculture, the acquisition of conservation easements, and suggests these be incorporated into local government plans. Management of agricultural lands for seasonal wildlife habitat use is also encouraged. The plan contains guidelines for maintenance of Delta levies according to the FEMA standards for safety, because the levies are critical for maintaining the Delta for all the uses the water promotes.

A key role the commission has adopted is to monitor and inform. A monthly memo is now circulating which recaps the pending state, local and federal projects in the Delta counties. A geographic information system is being developed, and plans are in place to connect with CERES.

Ms. Aramburu reviewed a map of the Delta with the original boundaries which were set by state legislation in 1959 and showed the changes in the land

use under the new Plan. She reviewed new programs such as the establishment of the Yolo Bypass and an agreement with the Corps of Engineers and Department of Fish and Game to allow enhancement of habitat in a flood plain area. The projects on the separate island areas were reviewed, as well as four potential island projects.

The revised EIR is expected to be out this year, and there is an application at the State Water Board. The commission was created with an ending date of January 1, 1997. The original plan was to be adopted in July of 1994, 18 months after the creation of the commission, but it was adopted in February of 1995. A decision concerning an extension of the commission has not been made.

In response to questions from the council, Ms. Aramburu explained the incentive programs that have been incorporated into the plan. She stated that the commission does not have any conservancy type program in place, but they are promoting that through the local government process.

PRESENTATION ON PRIVATE FARMLAND AND RESOURCE CONSERVATION - VALLEY CARE PROJECT

David Rosen, Ducks Unlimited, shared with the council some ideas and perspectives on cooperating with private landowners to expand biodiversity conservation in California. Mr. Rosen gave the council an overview of the wetlands history in the Central Valley, informing them that 95 percent of the historic wetlands have been lost, leaving 260,000 wetland acres which still winters an estimated 60 percent of the water fowl in the Pacific flyway.

Mr. Rosen presented an option for expanding wildlife conservation by working with private landowners to provide incentives and technical assistance to encourage conservation practices on their property. He referred the council's attention to a resource guide called Options for Wetland Conservation, which reviews a variety of programs that provide economic and technical assistance to farmers and other land managers.

The Ducks Unlimited Valley Care program provides cost share opportunities, technical assistance and recommendations that enable Central Valley farmers and other landowners to practice wildlife friendly methods of land management. Valley Care worked with the agricultural community to restore or enhance 4,255 acres of wetlands and enhanced 93,801 acres of agriculture land for wildlife and provided direct technical assistance for at least 96 landowners in the Central Valley.

Mr. Rosen recognized the efforts of the private landowners and farmers for their efforts in implementing the conservation practices and for their

commitment to conservation and complimented them for their contribution to the success of the Valley Care program.

John Anderson, a private landowner and manager of Hedro Farms, near Winters, continued the review with a discussion of farmers in agriculture and what they can do for biodiversity in the Valley. He reviewed the biodiversity efforts underway at Hedro Farms through the use of a slide program. Mr. Anderson commented on the upcoming farm bill and suggested the need for more incentives for landowners and farmers to encourage the practice of these conservation methods.

In response to questions from the council, Mr. Anderson reviewed the partnerships involved in this program. He recognized the local Department of Fish and Game, Natural Resource Conservation Service, ACP, Partners in Wildlife program, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as being very supportive.

The council was encouraged, relative to the farm bill, to advocate ways to provide conservation incentives so California could get more dollars in accordance with its needs. The council was also encouraged to solicit participation of local governments and subsidize those activities which help promote these types of programs. It was suggested the council consider outreach efforts to the agricultural community to help inform them of the opportunities that are available, such as the **Valley Care** project.

COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Anne Kinsinger, CBC Science Committee Update

Ms. Kinsinger informed the council that an update was presented at the May 11 Executive Committee meeting, and they are currently in the process of formulating some broader recommendations which will be presented at the August 10 Executive Committee meeting.

It was offered that the best help a science committee provides would be in a coordination or facilitation role. Proposed ideas are to:

1. Perform an assessment of the biological needs in California and identify current agency efforts
2. Have quarterly meeting forums where common needs could be discussed and information gaps could be identified.
3. Track research efforts, both past and future, using the CBC as a forum for disseminating research results. Workshops could be held and working groups could be organized to address particular issues.

4. Use bioregional conservation planning efforts as the main focus, and to assist in the interpretation of the information that is available.

Richard Wilson, Conservation Elements

Mr. Wilson informed the council of an approaching governor's conference and suggested the council transmit information to the governor and the delegates regarding the need for support for the conservation elements. It was suggested that staff consult with the various federal agencies regarding the itemization of the impacts from prospective budget changes in California.

Lynn Sprague, Sustaining Ecosystems: A Conceptual Framework

Mr. Sprague called the council's attention to a document entitled *Sustaining Ecosystems: A Conceptual Framework* which addresses three major issues: scientific concepts and principles; managing in an ecosystem context and how this fits in with the forest service planning process; and considerations for implementation.

The council suggested that because of the U.S. Forest Service's commitment to ecosystem management, they would be a likely participant in an upcoming effort in the Klamath Province which will take an ecosystem approach and address the Coho salmon issue. John Amodio followed with an announcement about this particular effort.

John Amodio, Klamath Province Salmon Initiative

Mr. Amodio provided the council with information regarding the efforts underway to assess the feasibility of an ecosystem management approach to the varied resources of the Klamath province which would draw upon the expertise and the commitment of the U.S. Forest Service, other federal and state agencies, as well as private stakeholders. The Resources Agency was contacted by the local Fish, Farm and Forest group who requested the agency take on the role of coordinating players and stakeholders in an effort to pursue measures to address the needs of Coho salmon.

It is expected that more information will be presented to the council in September, and at that time they will request advice from the council on whether to proceed with this project.

George Knotts, West Mojave Project

Mr. Knotts, Department of Fish and Game, representing the planning team on the West Mojave, reported on the West Mojave coordinated management plan and the recent completion of an administrative draft which has been sent for

review to the partners involved in this process. He explained the planning efforts as follows: to define a regional strategy for conserving plant and animal species and their habitats; to develop an efficient, equitable and cost effective process for complying with the recommended endangered species regulations; to provide for appropriate resource uses and community expansion; and to build partnerships with the federal, state and local agencies of government with private property owners.

The benefits of the plan to date are to provide a cooperative solution to habitat conservation and development, conserve 103 of the 114 species addressed in the plan, streamline the probation process, provide a programmatic permit to participating agencies for 103 species, increase the accuracy of documents for project cost, and reduce permit processing time.

Ed Hastey, Inventory of Multi-species Conservation Planning Efforts

Ed Hastey, from the Bureau of Land Management, reviewed with the council a map display and hand-outs compiled by Janine Stenback, CDF, that identifies some of the larger habitat conservation planning and other multi-species planning efforts that are being done in each of the state's bioregions. He requested the council and their staff provide feedback on the projects listed and assistance with identifying those projects that have been missed. He explained the desire to improve this effort by providing a narrative description of each of the projects, as to the objective, the area covered, the partnerships, and the time frame, and make this information available on the Internet via the council's home page and CERES. The benefit of such a project would be a better understanding of what is happening and how efforts can be better coordinated.

Michael Fischer, San Francisco Bay Joint Venture

Mr. Fischer invited members of the council to attend a meeting to be held on July 29 to explore the creation of a San Francisco Bay Joint Venture.

Helen Flach, NRCS

Ms. Flach, representing Hershel Read from the National Resources Conservation Service, reminded the council that the 1995-96 sign-up for the Wetland Preserve Program is now in progress and ends on June 30, 1995. Another sign-up for 1996 is not anticipated. This is an opportunity for an offer of permanent easements on converted, degraded or restored wetland areas. The agricultural value of the land can be paid up to a maximum of \$3,000 per acre. The program has recently been amended to allow payment of 100 percent cost sharing of the cost of restoration. It was suggested by the council to pursue a way by which NRCS would make notification to counties of change in purpose

regarding the land use.

Ms. Flach reviewed the evaluation process for selection. The criteria considered are long-term viability of the wetlands, the need for constant maintenance, adjacency to other wetland areas thus enhancing its value, its vulnerability to urban development or continued degradation. The state technical committee evaluates these criteria and site visits are conducted. After ranking the sites, the list is forwarded for selection to the national headquarters.

Robert Meacher, Annual Meeting of RCRC

Robert Meacher encouraged interested members of the council to attend the annual meeting of the Regional Council of Rural Counties on October 4, 5, and 6, 1995, at Mammoth Mountain Inn at Mammoth Lakes. The focus of the meeting will be on upper watershed management, the benefits to downstream users, the riparian rights issues, and who is going to pay for it.

Leading on to that, a meeting is being planned for October 12, 13, and 14, 1995, which will be a dialogue between the rural communities and the national interest groups and how society should pay for the long term economic, ecological and social sustainability of the rural west. Industry groups as well as conservation groups will be participating. This meeting is tentatively scheduled to be held in Plumas County.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Report on Executive Committee Meetings

John Amodio reported on the planning process of the executive committee and, in particular, an exercise conducted to rank the council's priorities for the next two years. executive committee members undertook an exercise to extract from the MOU the most important goals and related objectives for staff to work towards in the next two years. At the next council meeting, a report will be made on the highest priority projects that are identified through this process, as well as an assessment of the anticipated workload and additional staffing needs.

The regional managers workshop concept was also reviewed with the council. The goal of the workshop is to address several key issues in the Klamath bioregion, and to explore ways to enhance organizational effectiveness and cooperation. Carl Rountree reported on a recent meeting in Redding with a steering group of managers from the Klamath which was held to discuss the design of the workshop. The University of California at Davis Extension Service and Mark Nechodom have been retained to assist with the development of these workshops.

The workshop is tentatively scheduled for October 4, 1995 with 50 to 70 line managers and key staff leads from the Klamath bioregion. Two additional workshops are planned for next year, one in Southern California in concert with the Barstow meeting and another possibly in Central California in conjunction with the Monterey meeting.

Council Operations Budget

John Amodio and Don Erman informed the council that to date there have only been 12 contacts from members on how to be invoiced. U.C. Regents distributed a form that will be used to invoice the agencies. Checks are to be made out to the U.C. Regents and will be deposited in the income account for payment for council operating expenditures. The council was reminded to state ~~A~~ Membership Fees for the California Biodiversity Council ~~on~~ the payment. The need for full participation was emphasized.

Staff, Executive Committee, and Council Meetings Schedule

John Amodio announced the completion of the one year meeting schedule for staff, executive committee, and council meetings. This schedule will be mailed to council participants and will also be available through the council's home page. He extended an invitation to all interested parties to attend the Executive Committee meeting of June 16, 1995.

Discussion was held regarding the theme of the council meeting scheduled for September 21, 22, 1995, in Eureka. Proposed subjects were the salmon and forestry issues. The development of a program around the selected theme was deferred to the executive committee.

Retirement of Vice President Farrell

Don Erman announced the retirement of the University of California's representative, Vice President Farrell. Dr. William Gomes has been selected as the new representative and will be available for meetings in the fall. It was requested that his availability be considered in scheduling the future meeting dates.

Introduction of Maitland Sharpe

Ed Hastey acknowledged the attendance of Maitland Sharpe, from the BLM, at the council meeting. He was welcomed by Secretary Wheeler as well.

Introduction of Patricia Wright

Secretary Wheeler introduced Patricia Wright, US EPA, Office of Policy

Planning and Evaluation. The US EPA is a new member of the council.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

SCHEDULE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held in Eureka on September 21 and 22, 1995, at the Eureka Inn.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at noon.